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FRENCH-AMERICAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ANNCR:

THE CURRENT U.S. VISIT OF FRENCH PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING HAS IMPLICATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, AS WELL AS POLITICAL, SPHERES, VOA ECONOMICS EDITOR FRANK FEINBERG HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE:

IN HIS WELL RECEIVED ADDRESS TO THE U.S. CONGRESS TUESDAY (MAY 18) PRESIDENT GISCARD CALLED FOR MORE COOPERATION BETWEEN NATIONS, WHILE RESPECTING INDIVIDUAL INDEPENDENCE. WHILE THIS REMARK OBVIOUSLY HAS POLITICAL OVERTONES, IT EXEMPLIFIES FRANCE'S CONDUCT -- IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE--WITH UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE IN 1974, PRESIDENT GISCARD HAS ACTED TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP IN FRANCE, IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, AND WITH AMERICA AND OTHER NATIONS.

A FORMER FINANCE MINISTER, THE FRENCH LEADER, IS WELL VERSED IN ECONOMICS, AND HAS FIRM CONVICTIONS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRONG ECONOMIES AND POLITICAL STABILITY. AND HE APPEARS DETERMINED TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC TIES WITH BOTH HIS EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS AND OTHER NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THE FRENCH PRESIDENT'S PRAGMATIC, OPEN APPROACH HELPED MAKE POSSIBLE THE AGREEMENT AT RAMBOUILLET ON FLOATING EXCHANGE RATES LAST NOVEMBER, AND THE PACT FOR A NEW

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY SYSTEM AT JAMAICA THIS PAST JANUARY. JUST LAST WEEK, LEADERS OF TWENTY AFRICAN NATIONS WERE AT THE ELYSEE PALACE IN PARIS. AND THEY APPLAUDED PRESIDENT GISCARD'S CALL FOR CLOSER ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES.

THE FRENCH AND AMERICAN POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS ARE NOT SYMMETRICAL. SOME FRENCH MONETARY OFFICIALS STILL FAVOR FIXED EXCHANGE RATES BETWEEN NATIONAL CURRENCIES. AND FRENCH FINANCE MINISTER JEAN-PIERRE FOURCADE HAS VOICED RESERVATIONS ABOUT STATE SECRETARY'S KISSINGER'S PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES BANK, TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN CAPITAL-POOR COUNTRIES. THE FRENCH FAVOR USING EXISTING INTERNATIONAL FINANCE INSTITUTIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE.

SUCH DIFFERENCES ARE TO BE EXPECTED. WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT IN TODAY'S RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESIDENT GISCARD AND HIS COUNTERPARTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES IS HIS EARNEST ENDEAVOR TO EXCHANGE IDEAS. HIS CLOSE COOPERATION WITH WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT ON ECONOMIC MATTERS IS WELCOMED IN WESTERN EUROPE. AND HIS SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND TREASURY SECRETARY WILLIAM SIMON HAVE RESULTED IN REALISTIC RESPONSES TO BOTH BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL MATTERS.

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